



MISSIONS A NATURAL GROWTH FROM CHRISTIANITY.



A S E R M O N

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF

NEW-YORK AND BROOKLYN,

APRIL 6TH, 1856.

BY

REV. WILLIAM HOGARTH,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

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MARK 16 : 15.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

THE words of Jesus are always eminently fitting to the occasion which calls them forth. He was equal to any time. A careful perusal of all He said leaves the conviction that he uttered the best things, and in the most natural manner. In all the gospels there is nothing of the style which the schools dignify by the name of eloquence. Meeting with various classes of men, bred to differing modes of life, and occupying the various social positions, Christ always adapted his intercourse to their wants. And when he spoke to an assemblage, there was in his address a straightforward pertinency which laid its grasp on their hearts, and made them feel that a Master was dealing with its inborn subtleties, and its urgent needs. In no one instance is this fitness more obvious than in the last interview with the disciples recorded by John. He was about to leave them. He knew the sacrifices which they had made in following him; sacrifices of business, of national pride, of pre-

judice in favor of their ancestral faith, a faith which had been rendered illustrious by the splendor of the ancient temple, and endorsed by the shekinah. He knew to what trials and toils they were called—trials and toils from which no reprieve on earth would be granted. He knew they would need a stimulus and ministry of strength, a high and commanding motive for deeds of chivalric daring, and for the heroic endurance of privation. With a gentleness and naturalness all his own, he supplied that stimulus and presented the motive in the Scripture to which we have referred. How fitting those words are to sustain the soul may be learned from the whole history of His suffering saints into whose hearts they have gone with the light and fragrance of heaven.

At the time He uttered the text, his work on earth was accomplished. He had inaugurated a new dispensation; he had fulfilled the import of the ancient sacrifices and prophecy "by the offering of himself once for all." He had opened the way to life. His work of mercy was as broad as the ruin of the apostasy. He had chosen its messengers. And what could be more *natural* than to give to them a commission bearing a just ratio to the extent of the work which he had wrought? Hence, He says: "Preach the Gospel to every creature." Could he have said any other thing so fitting? Would any other word have been so appropriate to him, to the sacrifice for the sake of which sin is pardoned, to the duty of the disciples and to the world? Let us, then, occupy some moments with this theme, namely:

THE MISSIONARY WORK A NATURAL EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY. By the missionary work is meant an obedience to the letter of the text. It is to give the Gospel to all who are destitute of it—through any channels by which men may be reached. It is not the attempt to introduce the elements of civilization, literature, art, and commerce among a people. These may follow in the wake of a missionary enterprise, may attend it, or precede it. It may be important that a missionary should have an eye to these sources of power, and lines of influence, and skillfully employ them in subordination to his grand aim. But a missionary work, in the biblical sense of it, and in the view of apostolic example, looks beyond the culture of man's material and social condition to the renewal of his heart into the divine image by means of the word of life. This statement ventures no opinion as to the *methods* of doing the work ; it affirms the *end* to be regarded, and no more. It does not undertake to name a theory of conducting the labor, but declares what the *aim* of the labor must be in order to stamp it a missionary work. The Gospel must be preached to man. *This is the natural out-growth of Christianity.*

I. *The Old Testament economy was a limited one.* It had origin in the promises made to Abraham—promises of a national and religious greatness. It was confined to one people. Others were admitted to some of its privileges, when they sought those privileges. But the Jewish institutes did not embody the command to instruct and disciple other nations. On the contrary, they erected a barrier between Jews and Gentiles, and aimed to preserve a broad line of demarcation ; not so

much that others might remain untaught, as that the Jews might be preserved from the corruptions of other nations. Their geographical position, their employments, their social habits, also, contributed to make them a separate people. This was evidently the design of Providence, until the fullness of His plans of mercy should open to the world in the incarnation and death of his Son.

The method in which that economy enlarged upon itself was at least an intimation that it must, in the end, give way to one more ample and expressive of the munificence of the Divine compassion. In the first instance the most indistinct promises were made, the most elementary principles were taught, the simplest forms of worship were established. These in time, yielded to a more gorgeous yet burdensome ritual. The splendor of the temple succeeded the less ostentatious tabernacle. In prophecy, broader views, vaster plans, and better principles were dimly yet actually expressed. The clouds which curtained the august future began to rise from the horizon, and scattered rays from the source of light streamed over the earth like the morning dawn. *He* came who was very sacrifice. Jerusalem is no more the holy city. In what lowly hamlet, in what palatial home, in what forest solitude, in what tongue soever prayer is offered "in spirit and in truth," that place is holy. The *heart* of any meek, believing man is henceforth the altar on which offerings are laid—from which ascends the incense of gratitude and praise. "The middle wall of partition is broken down." The dispensation has at once opened into a more simple mode

of worship, and overgone the national barriers. The spirit of the old economy has been released from its bondage of ceremony, and goes forth in the freedom of its manhood.

This growth of the plans of God, this successive development of truth, intimates, if no more, the possibility of an inherent purpose of love as wide as the dominion of sin. It is presumptive that such an economy will furnish reasons, and find means for its universal extension; that it will inspire those who come within the spell of its power by a spirit of emprise as ample as its provisions of mercy. It is probable that such an economy has, in own vitality, the elements of its own diffusion; and no inference could be more natural than this from the history of God's dealings with man.

II. *The character of the Founder of Christianity* was such as to induce the belief of His boundless love for man. His character is obvious from the record of his life, and from his acts. Those who were familiar with him during the period of his public ministry, and whom every *earthly* motive tempted to forsake him; who saw him in the privacy of social intercourse, and had chances to study his motives from the stand-point which such intimacy gives; and who knew his public history, they have left but one verdict. The voice they utter is unanimous. They call Him "the Lamb of God," "without spot or blemish." They give testimony to his love, which did not shrink from death. All the single incidents which they have recorded of his miracles of healing, of his condescension in teaching, of his forbear-

ance with the blind and bitter prejudices of his own people, of his rare gentleness and meekness, are so many proofs of a noble beneficence, seeking the good of all who have suffered. His *love* is the distinct characteristic of his history. It knew no limit but the cure of evil. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." When opportunities opened which might appeal to the ambition of men, they did not tempt him. They had no sympathy with his mission. With the keen glance of his eye he saw the mischief sin had wrought, and with voluntary benevolence, he cried: "Lo I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me:" "A body hast thou prepared me." *He* was sent to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." To them he dispatched his disciples in the first instance. Afterwards their commission was extended, for his love sought the *race*.

If you would read the gospels, and from these gather your impressions of the character of Jesus, of the fullness and breadth and power of his mercy, would it not surprise you if, on "the great day of the feast," he had said: "If any *Jew* thirst let him come unto me and drink"? Could any such invitation have been harmonized with your inferences from his history? Would not the incongruity be painful and repellant? Leaving out of our count the question of his divinity, there is yet such a halo of glory on his character, such a fragrance of affection in his words and life, such purity and unstudied nature, we can only affirm that if in his hands there was a blessing, it was free for all, to the measure of his capacity. There is in data no basis for a conclusion if this be not true. The radiant mercy of

his character, which shone in each act of his eventful life, prepares us to hear him say : " Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

III. *The express instructions of the Bible* are to the same point. The text is conclusive. It is only necessary to supplement this, by saying there is not a truth in the Bible which would not increase the sum of human knowledge, and the amount of human happiness. There is not a sentiment expressed which can debase the mind, or deprave the morals, or disturb the peace of society. There is not a principle taught which does not at once illumine the present and the future with the light of heaven. These truths and principles are exactly adapted to meet all human needs. *Directly* they meet the great spiritual needs which, from the depths of consciousness, cry for help. *Indirectly*, they supply every other demand by giving right aims to the soul, and right habits in the life. To a thoughtful mind these adaptations are so patent and earnest as to indicate their Divine source ; and so imperative as to command with the inherent authority of truth that they be gratified in their achievement of man's best good. I can not say as a reforming skepticism has said, " that a true expediency is as binding as a positive revelation." But I may be permitted to say that a system of truth divinely given, and precisely adjusted to the necessity of the suffering and guilty, and bearing on each sentence the testimonial of its *specific* worth for such, and finding an echo in the universal heart, that such a system, *in its very nature*, commands a voice to proclaim it, and is not impudent

in its demands. We are prepared to hear it say, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house-tops." In every age, the Church has given to this and to similar language a uniform interpretation. It has been accepted as the Divine authority for missionary work.

IV. *The principles of the Gospel* lead to the same result. The Gospel holds two relations, namely, to its Author, whom it must truly represent, and to mankind, whom it seeks to bless. To the first it is an effect, growing from His mind and affections. To the second, it is a cause, embodying forces equal to the most stupendous issues. In this latter relation it enunciates *principles* which buttress the throne of the Highest, and it gives a record of facts illustrating the principles. The principles "crop out" through the history, giving it life and suggesting the source of the facts. It would lead me too far from my present purpose if I should aim to state all the first truths of the Gospel. Here I seek to present only those which bear on the topic we are discussing.

The Gospel first aims to restore in man the likeness of God, to re-produce in their pristine glory those elements of character which were lost by the fall. It deals with the soul, as that is the source of character, and of all right activity. The conventional moralities which good society demands, are immeasurably below the work which the word of life seeks to accomplish. In his thought, in his affections, in his impulses, man

must take the key-note from the revealed character of God. He is not commanded to tally with the best ethical system, to be even with the purest philosophies, to harmonize with the noblest philanthropies, to be gentle as the most humane sympathies. "Be ye *holy*; for I am holy." He is not called to indorse a creed, but to imitate an example, not alone to connect himself with a church, but to unite himself to Christ as the branch is united to the vine. This likeness to God the Father, in the moral nature of man, is the first great purpose of the Gospel.

It then commands a fervent obedience to the Divine authority. So strongly is this urged, that we are compelled to doubt a concrete religion which evades all possible responsibility. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." If they refuse to do, what then? It is vain to profess a regard for the Gospel, for its purities and peace, to dabble in sentimentalisms and humanities, and the religionism which is engrafted on the mere poetry of nature, and hesitate to look in the face the stern, old authority of truth, such truth as God has spoken. It is the very kernel of Christianity to take the dicta of the Divine mind as the law of life. They may be accepted with a reason and not blindly, with a loving spirit and not compulsorily, with a joyous heart, not sadly; but they must be *accepted*. In man, they must be the transforming power, and for man the last standard of appeal. Assimilation to the divine character, and a resultant obedience, these are first principles in the Gospel. Not a

step can be taken in the Christian life unless they are recognized as the starting-point.

Once more, the Gospel teaches the doctrine of a brotherhood in man. This it does historically, by tracing the race to a common ancestry. It does it doctrinally, by declaring their common inheritance in the misery of the fall. It does it divinely, by referring every man to one Saviour who never varies the conditions of salvation. It does this by the command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." I think there is no truth in the word of God more distantly removed from an abstraction than this. It has been perverted, indeed, to the patronage of every form of social revolution and agrarianism; it has been made to preach a levelling radicalism, and in some cases to bring on a collision of different classes. This we both confess and deplore. But it is a first truth, and to be held all the more firmly, as it is imperiled by men who abuse it for purposes sinister and vicious.

These are the things which we have said. Man must resemble God. *He* is benevolent to *all*; has made provision for the salvation of all, and sent his message of love to all. A Christian must be the same, must do the same. This the Lord has commanded. The Christian must obey the command. Each human being, how degraded soever, is his brother. By all the claims which such a kindred can make, must that brother be aided in his wants, be shielded in his sorrows, be strengthened in his weakness, be taught in his ignorance, and be led with the loving gentleness of the Gospel to the Saviour

whom it reveals. If this missionary work does not grow from the very principles of the Gospel, it might as well be dumb. If it does not bear *this* fruit, it has no claim on us.

V. *The history of Christianity* sustains our view. The history interprets its spirit. It is not possible that good men who have studied its precepts through eighteen centuries, who have prayed for wisdom, should entirely mistake its meaning. True, they have not exhausted its meaning: but it can not be that the very spirit of the economy has eluded their search. Least of all could this be true, when conformity with its spirit summoned them to a life of self-denial and rare endurance. If they had been called to a life of pleasure and indolence; if the purest men in the Church had sought their ease and self-indulgence; if this had been a very uniform fact, and received the approval of all men as consistent with the genius of religion, the inference would be resistless that the inmost aim of Christianity was a ministry of social and personal comfort.

But the first age of the Church, that which was nearest to the time of Christ, which may be supposed to understand most perfectly His views, was the golden age of missionary enterprise. From the period when, dispersed by persecution, they "went everywhere preaching the word," until this present, the people of God have recognized the obligation to give the Gospel to all men, and with more or less energy and success have pursued this line of duty. In those terrible corruptions which have obscured her glory and wasted her

strength, the advance has been small. Still, a few have been preserved who have prayed for Zion's welfare ; and the revival of a pure Christianity has always been the signal for a revival of missionary endeavor. There have been no exceptions to this fact. True, the work has been limited by want of facilities which commerce, science, and the art of printing, have multiplied in these latter days. And if the difficulties in the way are well considered, we must feel that the energy and piety of the Church have been often even with her advantages. At the present time this spirit is taking on a more domestic form, and exploring all the haunts of crime and woe which are the shame of Christendom, and giving to the needy at our own doors the word which is the "power of God unto salvation." That this spirit of the Gospel should perpetuate itself, that the prestige of success should impart zeal and courage, is *natural*.

These thoughts, so imperfectly expressed, are the evidence that a *missionary work is the natural evolution of Christianity*. It grows from the advancing method of God's economy. It springs from the character of its Author, and accords with his instructions. It is imbedded in the principles which He taught. It is an outgrowth from the history of Christianity. It is therefore a *natural idea* in the Christian scheme and spirit.

The way is prepared for some inferences. If the view we have taken be the correct one, then,

I. *We can see where the real elements of coöperative work are to be found.* There is a strong feeling pervad-

ing the hearts of good men that Christianity demands a union of spirit and purpose in its friends. This conviction arises from broader views of the Gospel, and from a stronger Christian life. It is a well-founded conviction. To realize it in actual experience is fast becoming a practical problem and is challenging the thought of the best minds. Some fear that the eye will be turned in the wrong direction, induces me to say what I deeply feel.

The too current idea of a coöperative Christianity, as I gather it from reading is this, namely, that different denominations of Christians shall so sink all their peculiar doctrinal views, and waive their ecclesiastical organizations, that the machinery shall work without any friction, that no seeming advantage shall be given to any one denomination. Whether or not this is possible at present, it is not easy to say. But the attempts which the theory suggests are certainly visionary. No amount of pains in adjusting platforms of action; no measure of charity in yielding cherished preferences under the idea that they are non-essential; no effort to blink the strong tendency of the age to ecclesiasticism, if not to sacerdotalism; no compacts to keep the peace, and to utter fraternal words which are not the natural reflection of the soul; no glorification of a nominal Christian union can possibly achieve a coöperative Christianity. Christianity is a unit in its teachings, and its spirit. It is essentially coöperative. It has, and can have but one aim. It seeks that aim through all the "diversities of gifts" bestowed on those who are called to its warfare, by preserving "the unity of the Spirit

in the bonds of peace." There is room in a field so vast for every variety of method and talent. Moreover, it is possible that the power of individual forces are underrated, that the power of organization is over-estimated, that individualism is too much merged in concentrated action through accredited institutions, and that what is styled a revolutionary and sectarian process is only the rupture of systematized constraints, in which the means have been substituted for the end. Be this as it may, we have no faith in the permanency and capacity of a coöperation which does not put its foundations on the central Christian idea, the union of the heart in Christ. The Church does not need so much to cherish the spirit of Christian union, as the spirit of Jesus. This latter is the directest way to the former. A towering *faith* and *love* must project their shadows over all social and ecclesiastical differences; if not so dense as to conceal those differences, yet so as to soften them in the shelter of its twilight. Votes in conventions will not cement estranged affections, nor hush suspicions. Beneath the most beautiful plains, where flowers bloom in quiet beauty, and murmuring streams mingle their notes in the melody of nature, where the ploughman opens the furrow to the sunlight, and hamlets gem the lawn; beneath such seeming harmonies, the earthquake sleeps. And when comes the time, and the materials are gathered, its voice of terror will be heard. Underneath seeming unions that catch the eye of the world, elements of rupture may be found working with intense energy. No verbal agreements can check the ongoing tendency to disunion; only the inculcation and the ac-

ceptance of a Christianity which naturally and preëminently evolves the missionary work.

II. *A church in a normal condition will engage in missionary enterprise.* Churches, so named, which have departed from the truth, and those which never held the truth, do make attempts in missionary labor. These are exceptional facts in their history, occurring under peculiar circumstances, and stimulated by considerations which do not find origin in the Gospel. Such exceptions will again occur. But the mass of sects that do not hold the fundamental doctrines embraced by Protestant churches have no missions. This is inevitable.

But a church in a healthy spiritual condition will make a business of giving the word of life to all men. It will not be an accident, not an episode, not a result from the pressure of outward forces in the history of such a church. It will be her daily work. A church is in a healthy condition when the inner life is vigorous, when the word of Christ rules in her counsels, and the spirit of Christ prompts her activities. There may be a large degree of outward thrift, an array of social influence, abundant means, a public regard, a place of commanding consideration, existing in a church when the decay of vital energy is going forward, and the pulse of its spirituality is waxing ever feebler. This has been usually the fact with churches that have sunk into mere inanities. What the adversary can not destroy, he will seek to corrupt, and to weaken by corruption. The process may last through a century. In

the mean time a fair outward prosperity may conceal the terrible defection.

Christ promised that the Spirit should *abide* with his people. His presence secures a genuine affection for God, a regard for the good of all men, a spirit of self-denial to the last extremity. It reproduces the divine in the human. This is the Gospel in the concrete—not a letter but a life—not a theory but an activity—not a creed but an onworking force. And any church in this state will naturally preach the Gospel by any avenue which promises success. It will do it as a development of its own life. It will do it in imitation of Christ, and in sympathy with his mission and sacrifice.

The Church does not exist or work for its own sake. Human governments often extend their territory by purchase or arms; they exact tribute, and levy taxes, not so much for the subject as for the government. The maintenance of that is the grand aim. But the kingdom of Christ exists and works only for the good of its subjects, and for those who may become such. It has no central source of power on earth to maintain—no visible head to whose support it is pledged. It has no object to be gained except in the happiness of mankind. For this it has a place and elements of power. I do not say the Church is to be lightly regarded even as an institution—that no collateral benefits flow from it. But the divine idea of it is this: that it is a medium through which the compassion of God is manifested and offered, and when unperverted by worldly maxims, and unseduced by worldly influences,

it seeks the accomplishment of its legitimate design—it does not labor for its own sake as an organization, but broadly preaches the mercy of God as revealed in the Gospel. It can do *no other* work as of first importance.

While we boast of this as a missionary age, it is a disheartening fact, that there is so much labor necessary to furnish the appliances for the work of preaching the Gospel to every creature. It is a sad symptom. Resources fail. The Board is oppressed with debt. Mission labor is curtailed. The young men of the Church find a sphere of activity in the business of life. Few seek the ministry; fewer, heathen lands. The money given is oftener regarded as a taxation than a privilege. There is little of that self-abnegation which brings wealth and children to the altar of God—little of that mighty faith which foresees the future in the promises of God. The love of the world is magnifying. The habits of society are receding from the simplicity of the truth. Yet the Gospel is accredited, its institutions are praised, its work celebrated. For the sake of the Church men will submit to a levy if it is not too depleting, not too often repeated. The shrinking sensitiveness which is afraid of thorough, hearty, spiritual work, can not ultimately hinder the purposes of God. The nations shall hear the “good tidings.”

The great Head of the Church will effect revolutions in her communions, fitting her for her high behests. And when the true life of Christ is regnant in the hearts of those who have recorded their names in His house, the work of missions will be spontaneous and

natural. It will come with the sympathies which bind the Church in closer union with Jesus, as gushes the water from a crevice in the rock, when fed by a living spring.

III. *The missionary spirit is not a specialty.* If the missionary work is a moral necessity, from the nature of Christianity, the missionary *spirit* is equally such a necessity. It is a real misfortune that we have bounded the idea of such a spirit by actual, personal labor in heathen lands. Here and there in the Church are found a few who devote themselves to such labor. Forthwith they are indorsed as having the spirit of a missionary. It is implied that others have no kindred spirit, and are not expected to have it. The result of such a general conviction is soon obvious. A true sympathy for missions is exiled from the hearts of those who should stand by the throne, laden with prayer, and filled with benevolence. It is a matter of doubt which most manifests the spirit of the Gospel, the daughter, who, in the fervor of youth or the blush of womanhood, goes abroad, or the aged widow of three-score years who parts with her last child, leaving the maternal benediction on her head, then pursuing her solitary way to the grave, looking to the ministry of strangers in the hour of her greatest need.

In the measure that a missionary spirit is regarded as a specialty in the Christian life, does the demand become imperative for calling the attention of the Church to the genius of the Gospel. Of that boon, bought with the blood of Christ, there is no monopoly. It is a

gift for the world. Every man into whose hands it comes, into whose soul it enters with light and joy, every man whose eye is opened to see its beauty and worth, is by such fact a missionary. "Let him that heareth say, Come." The identity of the Christian and missionary spirit is a first truth. The spirit is the same. There may be need of instruction as to the lines of duty and the necessity of the mass of our race, but the true Christian life responds to that instruction with electric promptness. There are no such lines of distinction as make one man more a missionary than another, only for the reason that he labors in another field. The man who seeks information from every quarter of the globe, that he, as a steward of God, may best know how and where to appropriate his means so as to please the Master who intrusted them to his care—the man who gives his child to a foreign field, and gives him from the wealth of his love to Jesus—the man who has no more to give than the full prayer of his soul, and gives that—these all have the missionary spirit, because they have a Christian spirit. A Christian heart in which pulsates no love for the work of missions—or a mission spirit which does not grow out of the Christian life—these are anomalies which we can not understand, which find no explanation in the revealed word. We are looking with hope, for the time when every man given to Christ is thereby given to the world; when the acceptance of Christ in the heart by faith, will be a commission to preach the "Gospel to every creature." Shall that glad day soon dawn? Nor men nor resources then shall be wanting. The harvest

will soon be gathered, and earth bloom with the beauty of Eden. Each home will be vocal with the praise of the Saviour, and each heart a temple to his name.

IV. If the missionary work is a natural evolution of Christianity, the *Church needs an enlarged scale of missionary labor*. If any question has been settled so as never to need a review, it is this: that a church can not live and thrive except by the most intense activities. What has been done in the way of preaching the Gospel to the nations has returned with interest. The general sum of knowledge has been increased. Collateral evidence of Christianity has been accumulated. The commerce and literature of the world have been extended. New objects of prayer and hope have opened to the Church. Those who love Zion have been united in closer amity. Revivals of religion have followed missionary effort. The tone of genuine piety has been strengthened. The heart of the Church has been drawn upward into a sweeter communion with the Lord. The word of truth, and the significance and power of the atonement have been more thoroughly understood. The plans of God, in all their grandeur, have been unrolling before the open eye. A field of Christian enterprise has been discovered. The spirit of benevolence has been cultivated. The Church can not spare such benefits. They enrich her. It is a peculiarity of the spirit of the Gospel that it increases by expenditure—that it enlarges in proportion to its outlays. If it be in the nature of Christianity to give, and to do; if this is its chief work; if its beneficence is its life,

then the most fatal disaster that could befall its interests would be to entertain any thought of a policy which should seek to circumscribe its work. If all our missionary enterprise should cease in our hands to-day, it might save some money in our coffers, it might keep some of our sons and daughters by our hearth-stone, but it would stifle many a prayer that has lived in the soul for years with a growing strength; it would turn back into the heart of many a devoted Christian the tide of love which has been ceaselessly flowing; it would sunder some of the dearest Christian ties and blot out some of the brightest hopes which gild the horizon. No; the Church needs a policy of missions evermore expanding in order to give scope to her sympathies, tone to her piety, and might to her exertions. It is as essential as her own vital growth. Without this, there can be no evolution of the Christian spirit, no gradual and grand unfolding of the dignity and power of the Christian character. Without this the man, the Church, must be dwarfed always, and the genius of the Gospel obscured. The thoughts which God has spoken in his word will not be grasped. With a vision near-sighted, with palsied limbs and in veriest decrepitude for want of exercise the Church will drag along in her joyless pathway. So surely as Christianity finds expression in missionary exploits, she must have a scope as wide as her mission, and a motive impulsive as the love of Christ, and appealing as the death-throe of a world sinking to the dark grave in sad impenitence. Ampler and still ampler must be her pol-

icy and her prayer, if her inward strength is fed, and she climbs to the eminence of her privilege.

V. If missions spring naturally from Christianity, then *we may expect God's blessing to attend them.* From his own nature came Christianity. He inspired it so far as it is a matter of record. He illustrated it in the life of his Son. He appointed its mission. He gives its life to the individual. He teaches its meaning. He makes it a ministry of joy and hope to the believing heart. He has pledged its success to his Son. He has not withdrawn his promise or command concerning it. All his providential dealings indicate his purpose to crown missionary labor with his benediction. The records of the past are fruitful in encouraging facts.

To the eye of faith the future is glorious. In all the events which transpire among the nations, his hand is visible. Never was human mind so active and wakeful as at present. Never were there larger expectations of the incoming of a new order of things. Never did hoary despotisms so tremble in the presence of manhood asserting its rights. Never was the voice of liberal principles so manly and firm. Never were old dynasties, enthroned for ages and cemented with blood, so lunatic and smitten with fear. Never did the universal heart of man find so free utterance. Its very longings are prophetic. Events are hastening. The limits of the world are narrowing. Nationalities are being obliterated. The press, the mightiest enginery of modern times, is increasing knowledge. Commerce -

is amplifying. Science is making all nature tributary to man's comfort. The power of man is multiplying, and the grapple with his worst foes draws on. There are stirring scenes before us. There are revolutions ripening which will scoff at "the balance of power." The seeds of these are sown by every press, by every free voice that rings through the nations, by every Bible and tract distributed. The cloud is lifting, and what a vision opens! There are suspicions and fears, and jealousies and ambitions. They struggle for the victory. In the midst of all these strange convulsions, the men of God are speaking his word. They pursue their calm way undisturbed by fears, with eye uplifted towards the throne of the Highest. Their work thrives.

Politicians and statesmen refer us to social and civil causes in order to account for the troubled state of the world. It may be that only such causes come within their range of view. It is moreover a fact that through such agencies the highest religious events are wrought out. But with the past all legible with the evidence of a divine force working through human forces, with the prophecy of the Scriptures in hand, with the design of the atonement clear as the morning, with some definite experience of the spirit of the Gospel, and with some small measure of faith, we can easily see that the Lord is casting up a highway for the word. His messengers shall travel with all the means of commerce, shall employ all the facilities of art and education, shall subdue to the purposes of mercy the resources of the world.

God will give his benediction to every attempt to

fulfill his command, to glorify his Son in the proclamation of his love. That blessing shall grow more benignant and commanding as the day of ultimate triumph approaches. "A nation shall be born in a day." Our work is not bootless. It shall prosper. The hand of God is in it. We may expect his love to crown it. He is mightier than oppositions. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." The "Gospel shall be preached to every creature," and the smile of Jehovah shall be its passport to the heart, and its earnest of a glorious victory.

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

NEW-YORK AND BROOKLYN FOREIGN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.



THE Foreign Missionary Society of New-York and Brooklyn completes, to-night, the twenty-ninth year of its operations. During the passing months of another year God has graciously continued us in the stewardship of his bounties, held out to us his encouraging promises, and opened his ear to our prayers, while he has been saying, "Go, preach my Gospel." "The field is the world."

This is an occasion which calls us to review the past, to observe the leadings of Providence, to prepare for the future, and to ask with deep solicitude what have we done, what are we doing in obedience to our Lord's great command?

The year, covered by the reports which were presented this evening, has been marked throughout by the Divine blessing upon the Missionary work.

At home, while fears have been excited in view of reported changes in our missionary operations, and much discussion called forth in regard to the wisdom of those changes, it is believed that the discussion has only developed a deeper interest in the cause, and prepared the way for a more complete agreement as to the best means of securing the great end which all the friends of missions have at heart. The recent special meeting of the Board at Albany, to which many looked forward with apprehension, seemed eminently marked by the spirit of Christian kindness and earnest prayer. Those who went with solicitude, returned to thank God and take courage.

Abroad also, the work has been crowned with peculiar favor from on high. The year opened amid scenes of fierce and desperate struggle. China was rent by barbarous revolutions. A fearful and bloody war was raging in close proximity to the most important and promising of our missionary fields—a war which threatened to involve the whole eastern world, and awakened dark forebodings as to its effects on all our missionary operations. But God has been better to us than our fears. In China, amid scenes of butchery and blood, the work, though somewhat retarded, was nowhere suspended; while, in Amoy and vicinity, particularly, the special

effusions of the Divine Spirit have proved the Lord on high to be mightier than the noise of many waters—while He causes the wrath of man to praise him. In Persia, the opposition of the royal court, which threatened seriously to interfere with the labors of our brethren among the Nestorians, has been so far removed as to allow them to proceed without interruption. In Western Asia, notwithstanding “the thunder of the captains and the shouting,” the work of God has gone prosperously on. The Gospel is taking a still deeper hold on the Armenian mind, and spreading to places in the interior which no missionary has yet reached. New churches have been planted; and our hearts have recently been gladdened with the tidings that another, the *thirtieth* among the Armenians, has been just organized in Oorfa, the supposed birth-place of Abraham; thus, after forty centuries, reviving the faith of that man of God, in the home of his childhood. Other and yet more remarkable indications also there are—though, for obvious reasons, it may be unwise to do more than merely allude to them—of God’s gracious presence in those lands of the East. It may not be improper to say, however, that there are so many and such striking evidences, that He is moving upon the minds of multitudes hitherto unreached by the Gospel—awakening their intense interest in divine truth, and preparing them eagerly to inquire for, and readily to receive it—as to animate our missionary brethren with the strongest hopes, and call them to special efforts to meet those now demands upon their time and strength.

If, during a year of warfare, when all the aspects of Divine Providence would seem to have been peculiarly adverse to missionary operations, God has thus brought light out of darkness, what advances of his kingdom may we not expect now, when the whole civilized world is rejoicing at the return of peace among the nations?

But if we have to sing of mercy, we have also to speak of judgment. Death has been at work in our missionary band. The aged and the young—the veteran soldiers of the cross, with hoary hairs and ripe experience, bearing upon their persons many a mark of the long conflict of faith; and others, newly enlisted in the ranks, who had just gone from the bosom of our churches, with strong hope and ardent zeal, and the promise of continued usefulness—Poor and Seudder, Hitchcock and Benjamin, Humo and Lobdell, have alike finished their work. They have obeyed the command, “Come up hither,” and gone to meet the great Captain of our salvation on high. And others also, daughters of the Church, fitting and faithful helpers in the work, have, during the year, been called to lay down the cross and take up the crown.

From this glance at some of the great features of the missionary work, we may turn to the efforts which this Society has made to promote it. How closely and faithfully have we walked in these footmarks of God? The duties of our Association are limited and definite. Its objects, as set forth in its constitution, are two: “To disseminate missionary intelligence, and to raise funds in aid of the missions under the care of the parent Society.” These objects the Directors have kept steadily in view. To secure the first, they have sustained for years, on the afternoon

of the first Monday in every month, a meeting at the Tract House, at which, by the Corresponding Secretary of the Board, and such Missionaries as may from time to time be in the city, the latest intelligence is communicated from the different stations. The aim has been by such means to bring every part of the missionary field directly under the eye of the churches represented there. Our own hearts have often burned within us, as we thus heard the sound of God's goings among the nations, and the voice of our brethren in the field fell on our ears, "Come over and help us." We have been deeply affected as we have listened to the glowing eloquence and strong appeals of those who, just returned from foreign lands, have spread before us the wants of multitudes ready to perish, and urged us to a loftier standard of effort and self-denial in their behalf. And we have felt that, in proportion as the needs of a dying world, and the blessing of God upon the labors of those who seek to give it His Gospel, could be brought clearly before the minds of Christians, in that proportion would be the fervor of their prayers, and the increase of their contributions. But while the great work of the world's evangelization is still far from its accomplishment, and while its progress has not failed to develop new features of interest and importance, the Directors regret to say that there has been a falling off in the attendance upon the meeting. This may be in part accounted for by the general removal of church-members to the upper and distant portions of the city. And yet it is believed that the slight sacrifice even thus required, would be more than repaid by the fresh interest which the friends of the cause might gain to themselves by their attendance, and the impulse which their presence and sympathy would give to others.

Arrangements have been made to secure the almost simultaneous presentation of the cause, and the collection of funds among the churches. Still further to increase the efficiency of the Society, two Directors are chosen annually from each church, whose duty it is, in the language of the constitution, "to do all in their power to enlist every member, both of the church and congregation, in the missionary work, and to take measures to secure systematic and regular contributions to the funds of the Society, from the churches and Sabbath-schools." This system has now been in operation for six years. Its first results were very encouraging. Our contributions went up, the first year, in round numbers, to \$16,000, the second year to \$18,000, the third to \$22,000, and the fourth to \$23,000. Would that we could go on to speak of yet larger offerings to the treasury of the Lord. But instead of this, the receipts fell the last year to \$21,000, and the present year they have gone down to \$19,000. The plain and humiliating fact is, that our contributions to the great object of a world's conversion have been \$2000 less this year than they were the last, and more than \$4000 less than the year before.

It was suggested at our last anniversary, that the deficiency then reported might have arisen from the general embarrassments of business, and the new claims upon charity made by multitudes of the destitute and suffering in the midst of us. But to what shall we now attribute this still greater deficiency? There has been no blot-

ting out of any of our churches, no falling off in the numbers of those who have consecrated themselves and their substance to Christ and his cause, no drying up of our pecuniary resources. On the contrary, these all have largely increased. Never has there been a greater accumulation of wealth in the hands of the professed people of God in these cities than now. But, while rejoicing in his bounty, are we forgetting the great purpose for which He has intrusted it to our keeping? It is charged against an ancient king, that he "rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him," and therefore, it is told us, "there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem." If we are guilty of the sin of Hezekiah, shall we not fear its punishment? "There is that withholdeth more than is meet and yet tendeth to poverty"—yea, the sorest and sharpest—poverty of grace—poverty of soul.

But we can not admit for a moment that the hearts of Christians among us have grown cold in the work of missions. Other incidental and temporary causes, we would trust, have led to this apparently backward step, when God, by his providence and his spirit, has been so loudly calling us to go forward. Let us remember that we are His stewards. Let us live as such. Let our regrets for the past be turned into strong and soul-compelling resolves for the future. Let us aim to reach that high standard of self-denial and sacrifice which is given us in the agony of the garden and the cross—which was followed by apostles and martyrs, and led to the early triumphs of Christianity—which we find everywhere in the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom. Let us feel and pray, let us labor and give as we should do if, on our ears alone of all the children of men, the tidings of redemption had fallen, and it depended on our individual exertions whether the vast multitudes of our race were to be reached and won by the truth as it is in Jesus.

A. A. WOOD, *Corresponding Secretary.*

THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF NEW-YORK AND BROOKLYN

In account current with their Treasurer, ALMON MERWIN.

From April 1st, 1855, to March 31st, 1856.

	Dr.	
Paid for earriage-hire, ...	\$9 50	
" 3000 copies Dr. Adams' Sermon, ...	141 87	151 37
Entered in account at sundry times with James M. Gordon, } Treasurer of the A.B.C.F.M., }		19,311 48
		<u>\$19,462 85</u>

CR.

By Cash, from the following sources :

Allen-street Presbyterian Church, ...	108 07	
Brick " "	748 89	
Broadway Tabernacle, ...	142 43	
Central Presbyterian Church, ...	151 01	
Church of the Puritans, ...	1122 51	
Eastern Congregational Church, ...	133 83	
Eleventh Presbyterian "	100 00	
Fourteenth-street "	2233 22	
Fourth Ave. Presbyterian "	333 33	
Harlem " "	48 91	
Houston-street " "	40 00	
Mercer-street " "	3856 01	
Madison-square " "	2019 38	
North " " . . . . .	.....	
Presbyterian Church on University Place, ...	650 00	
Seventh Presbyterian Church, ...	217 39	
Sixth-street " "	46 00	
Spring-street " "	143 67	
Thirteenth-st. " "	69 00	
Twentieth-st. Congregational Church, ...	44 72	
West Presbyterian Church, ...	282 55	
West 23d-st " "	161 57	
Sundry donations in New-York and Brooklyn, ...	1737 33	14,389 82
Bedford Congregational Church, Brooklyn, ...	9 09	
Church of the Pilgrims, ...	2396 61	
Clinton Avenue Congregational Church, ...	77 55	
Elm Place " " . . . . .	.....	
First Presbyterian Church, ...	614 08	
Plymouth Congregational Church, ...	271 38	
Park " "	35 00	
South Presbyterian "	929 15	
Second " "	352 00	
South Congregational " . . . . .	.....	
Third Presbyterian "	261 62	
Westminster " "	30 63	
Warren-street Mission, ...	10 66	
Williamsburgh First Presbyterian Church, ...	50 00	
Hoboken, N. J., ...	35 26	5073 03

E. & O. E.

NEW-YORK, March 31st, 1856.

Examined and found correct.

O. E. WOOD,	} Auditors.
LEWIS E. JACKSON,	

A. MERWIN,

Treasurer.

\$19,462 85

RECEIPTS OF THE SOCIETY.

THE following statement exhibits the receipts of the Foreign Missionary Society of New-York and Brooklyn, from its organization in 1827 to April, 1850:

From 1827 to April, 1836, (nine years), ...	\$86,931 28
For the year ending April, 1837, ...	19,068 72
“ “ “ 1838, ...	11,195 53
“ “ March, 1839, ...	12,433 07
“ “ April, 1840, ...	10,131 33
“ “ March, 1841, ...	11,721 17
“ “ April, 1842, ...	15,937 73
“ “ “ 1843, ...	10,432 42
“ “ “ 1844, ...	14,018 10
“ “ “ 1845, ...	11,974 88
“ “ “ 1846, ...	10,425 10
“ “ March, 1847, ...	9,867 59
“ “ “ 1848, ...	11,834 70
“ “ April, 1849, ...	19,536 56
“ “ “ 1850, ...	14,217 58
Total in 23 years, ...	<u>\$269,725 76</u>

The following is a view of legacies paid into the treasury of the American Board from New-York and Brooklyn since the organization of this Auxiliary:

For the year ending March 31, 1834, from New-York, ...	\$964 60
“ “ “ 1836, “ “	250 00
“ “ “ 1838, “ “	1350 00
“ “ “ 1839, “ “	2865 00
“ “ “ 1840, “ “	5602 86
“ “ “ 1842, “ Brooklyn, ...	133 78
“ “ “ 1843, “ “	100 00
“ “ “ 1844, “ “	100 00
“ “ “ 1846, “ New-York, ...	100 00
“ “ “ 1847, “ Brooklyn, ...	500 00
“ “ “ 1848, “ New-York, ...	3094 38
“ “ “ 1849, “ { “ \$1265 00 }	1365 00
“ “ “ “ { Brooklyn, 100 00 }	
“ “ “ 1850, “ New-York, ...	100 00
“ “ “ 1852, “ “	20 00
“ “ “ 1853, “ “	885 00
“ “ “ 1854, “ “	3264 00

RECEIPTS FOR THE YEARS 1852, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856.

	Year ending March 31, 1852.	Year ending March 31, 1853.	Year ending March 31, 1854.	Year ending March 31, 1855.	Year ending March 31, 1856.
Allen-street Presbyterian Church, N. Y.	\$129 00	\$137 07	\$186 40	\$166 73	\$168 07
Brick " " "	943 14	911 88	941 87	869 04	743 69
Broadway Tabernacle " "	258 01	284 24	278 03	169 82	142 43
Central Presbyterian " "	687 40	1,016 82	892 06	317 23	151 01
Church of the Puritans, (Cong.) " "	1,232 27	454 60	2,174 73	1,846 26	1,122 51
Eastern Congregational Church, " "	19 09	31 57	52 94	162 44	183 83
Eleventh Presbyterian " "	88 85	169 34	170 08	100 00	100 00
Fourteenth-st. " " "	469 73	997 88	1,519 01	663 28	2,233 22
Fourth-avenue Pr. " "	875 06	781 60	935 49	642 83	333 33
Harlem Presbyterian " "	76 60	53 47	81 64	76 88	43 91
Houston-st. " " "	25 50	19 50	76 75	53 08	40 00
Mercer-st. " " "	5,139 11	6,726 86	6,404 93	6,244 50	3,856 01
Madison-sq. " " "	.....	50 00	1,126 76	2,604 75	2,919 38
North " " "	.....	30 00	72 27	50 87	.....
Presb. Ch. on University place, " "	250 00	850 00	500 00	200 00	650 00
Seventh Presbyterian Church, " "	213 77	190 53	36 98	162 80	217 39
Sixth-street " " "	.....	.....	5 00	50 00	46 00
Spring-street " " "	81 76	128 17	150 00	145 44	143 67
Thirteenth-st " " "	38 06	39 34	222 70	164 28	69 00
Twentieth-st. (Cong.) " "	.....	.....	.....	.....	44 72
West Presbyterian " " "	406 69	865 59	502 42	232 59	282 55
West 23d-st. " " "	25 00	102 65	163 42	177 06	161 57
	\$10,958 95	\$13,290 45	\$16,274 48	\$14,979 38	\$12,652 49
Bedford Congregational Ch., Brooklyn,	11 39	15 10	19 59	12 76	9 09
Ch. of the Pilgrims, (Cong.) " "	2,065 23	2,420 21	2,267 59	1,260 00	2,396 61
Clinson-av. Cong Church, " "	40 00	351 31	215 64	.....	77 55
Elm-place Cong. " " "	.....	.....	.....	82 41	.....
First Presbyterian " " "	831 58	935 87	1,322 99	630 46	614 08
Plymouth Cong. " " "	452 46	303 12	445 00	483 49	271 33
Park-place " " "	.....	.....	.....	49 78	35 00
South Presbyterian " " "	1,219 32	2,476 94	1,633 25	1,604 00	929 15
Second " " "	56 28	942 18	416 27	300 00	352 00
South Cong. " " "	.....	16 52	28 67	65 82	.....
Third Presbyterian " " "	135 63	111 70	215 23	67 56	261 62
Westminster " " "	.....	.....	.....	.....	30 63
Warren-street Mission Church, " "	.....	.....	.....	31 23	10 66
First Presb Church, Williamsburgh,	68 75	72 00	63 24	70 00	50 00
Hoboken Presbyterian Church,	.....	.....	.....	7 81	35 26
	\$5,827 64	\$7,704 95	\$6,123 72	\$4,215 32	\$5,673 03
Sundry donations in New-York and Brooklyn,..... }	\$1,823 23	\$1,917 11	\$1,298 38	\$2,337 74	\$1,737 23
Total,.....	\$18,109 82	\$22,911 51	\$23,696 58	\$21,532 44	\$19,462 65

Note.—Of the \$22,911.51 reported for the year terminating March 31, 1853, the sum of \$6859 was a special contribution for the debt of the Board in 1852.

LIST OF OFFICERS

FOR THE YEAR 1856.

PRESIDENT.

DAVID HOADLEY.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

ANSON G. PHELPS,	|	WILLIAM E. DODGE,
CHARLES J. STEDMAN,	|	OLIVER E. WOOD.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

REV. WILLIAM HOGARTH.

RECORDING SECRETARY.

ALMON MERWIN.

TREASURER.

ALMON MERWIN.

DIRECTORS.

<i>Allen-street Presbyterian Church,</i>	....	JOHN P. PRALL, JOSEPH W. LESTER.
<i>Brick " "</i>	....	A. L. ELY, C. H. MERRY.
<i>Broadway Tabernacle, "</i>	....	W. G. WEST, ISRAEL MINOR.
<i>Central Presbyterian, "</i>	....	W. P. COOK, JAMES W. DUNNING.
<i>Church of the Puritans, "</i>	....	JAS. C. WOODRUFF, H. O. PINNEO.
<i>Eastern Congregational Church,</i>	....	NOAH T. SWEZEY, LEWIS CHICHESTER.
<i>Eleventh Presbyterian " "</i>	....	ALEX. MCNEY, J. H. BULEN.
<i>Fourteenth-st. " "</i>	....	LUCIUS HART, J. F. JOY.
<i>Fourth-avenue " "</i>	....	ALFRED POST, EDWARD CHESTER.
<i>Harlem " "</i>	....	E. KETCHUM, JAMES RIKER, JR.
<i>Houston-street " "</i>	....	S. DERRICKSON, DAVID STEVENS.
<i>Mercer-street " "</i>	....	W. W. CHESTER, G. MANNING TRACY,
		RICH. BIGELOW.

<i>Madison-square</i>	"	"	 F. BELL, A. O. VAN LENNEP.
<i>Manhattanville</i>	"	"	 E. A. PEARCE.
<i>North</i>	"	"	 O. H. LEE, JAMES REEVE.
<i>Presbyterian Church, University place,</i>			 W. W. STONE, HENRY BANGE.
<i>Seventh Presbyterian Church,</i>			 CHARLES MERRILL, H. B. LITTELL.
<i>Sixth-street</i>	"	"	 FRANCIS DUNCAN.
<i>Spring-street</i>	"	"	 JOHN ENDICOTT, AUSTIN REQUA.
<i>Thirteenth-st.</i>	"	"	 JOHN C. HINES, W. J. JOHNSON, M. D.
<i>West</i>	"	"	 LEWIS E. JACKSON, A. D. F. RANDOLPH.
<i>West 23d-st.</i>	"	"	 HENRY D. CRANE, GURDON BURCHARD.
<i>Bedford Cong. Church, Brooklyn,</i>			 D. O. CAULKINS, EDWARD T. GOODALL.
<i>Clinton-av.</i>	"	"	 SAM'L E. WARNER, JAS. W. RAYNOR.
<i>Church of the Pilgrims,</i>			 SIDNEY S. SANDERSON, S. F. PHELPS.
<i>Elm-place Cong. Church,</i>			 F. W. BURKE, ALFRED SMITHERS.
<i>First Presb.</i>	"	"	 RUFUS R. GRAVES, ISAAC N. JUDSON, J. W. HAYES.
<i>Plymouth Cong.</i>	"	"	 J. T. HOWARD, ARTHUR NICHOLS.
<i>Park</i>	"	"	 ALFRED SMITH.
<i>Second Presb.</i>	"	"	 CHARLES CLARKE, A. B. BAYLIS.
<i>South</i>	"	"	 DAVID A. HOLBROOK, JOHN CATTNACH, A. L. VAN BUREN.
<i>South Cong.</i>	"	"	 SOLOMON FREEMAN, MR. PARSONS.
<i>Third Presb.</i>	"	"	 W. W. HURLEUT, J. C. HALSEY, M. D.
<i>Westminster Presb.</i>	"	"	 WALTER S. GRIFFITH, JOHN MILTON SMITH.
<i>Warren-st. Mission</i>	"	"	 GEO. H. WILLIAMS, N. H. HOLT.
<i>First Presb. Church, Williamsburgh,</i>			 JOSEPH F. TUTTLE, J. W. BUCKLEY.
<i>First Presb. Church, Hoboken,</i>			 A. W. ROSE, JOSEPH BOYNTON.



